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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 5854
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 9663
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - BURMA

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Most Thursday morning papers gave top play to Wednesday's one-on-one debate between Prime Minister Aso and DPJ President Hatoyama.

¶2. "Myanmar Should Not Become 'Another North Korea'" The liberal Mainichi editorialized (8/13): "Many people share the view that there are 'insufficient grounds' for the suspicion that Myanmar has begun developing nuclear weapons. However, the military junta lacks transparency. Although it is not as bad as the North Korean government, which refuses to tolerate the existence of people who resist the totalitarian regime, the government of Myanmar is difficult to comprehend because it shows little regard for the nation's economic development and the welfare of its people. It could even be said that there is a danger of Myanmar becoming another North Korea.... The Japanese government should take steps to prevent Myanmar from becoming another North Korea through policy coordination with the U.S., and involving China and India."

¶3. "Japan Should Reinforce Sanctions" The conservative Sankei stated in an editorial (8/13): "Japan continues to provide assistance to Myanmar that is 'urgent and important from a humanitarian point of view,' such as a scholarship program for human resources development. However, the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi proves that Japan's flexible approach has produced no results. Japan should reinforce sanctions on Myanmar through coordination with the U.S. and European nations and call on China, which has an influence over Myanmar, to carry out its responsibilities. Tokyo should apply strong pressure on the junta to make it end its military cooperation with North Korea."

ZUMWALT